

deserve. Let's hope Chairman Arafat fully appreciates the precarious nature of his current position and how the choices he makes in the immediate future will determine what role he will play in future peace negotiations.

I want to conclude, by expressing my profound sadness for the tragic loss of life that has befallen both Israelis and Palestinians in this conflict. As a person of faith, I value the inherent dignity of every human being and believe all interested parties have a responsibility to actively pursue the benefits of peace and freedom. It is my sincere hope that through strong leadership and determination, the next generation of Israeli and Palestinian children will be able to focus on building a prosperous future instead of on the carnage and destruction of the past.●

EVERY DAY IS EARTH DAY IN OREGON

● Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I come to the floor today on the occasion of Earth Day, which was first officially recognized 32 years ago. I can assure you, however, that the spirit of Earth Day has been in bold practice for generations in my home State of Oregon, where the words of John Jay ring true: "this land and these people were made for each other."

What is unique about Oregon is that, for so many, there is a profound connection between the products and comforts of our daily lives and where those products ultimately came from. In Oregon, it is difficult to forget that the wood our homes are built of came first from a forest, a forest that was harvested and has since been regenerated. We know that the food we buy for our families at grocery stores came first from a farm, a farm most likely owned and operated by another family not unlike our own. Oregonians can easily remember these things because the forests and the farms are not in some distant region, they are right down the road.

Down those countryside and mountain roads, you will find Oregon's first and finest environmentalists: generations of fishers, farmers and foresters who learned long ago that Oregon's rich natural resources could be perpetually sustained through careful stewardship and innovation.

Down one of those roads, near The Dalles, you will find the Baileys, who were recently given the American Farmland Trust's Steward of the Land Award. The Bailey's orchard was established in 1923, and successive members of the Bailey family have continued to use the latest research and technology to minimize the farm's impact on the land and water. The Baileys initiated an Integrated Fruit Production program for their trees, which includes efficient and responsible pest management, irrigation practices and control of weeds without residual herbicides.

They have also been strong advocates of preserving farmland and agricultural

communities. For the Baileys and so many others, the values of the farm go far beyond the safe and affordable food they provide, but also extends to the scenic open space, wildlife habitat and filters for clean air and water that the farm provides.

The growing awareness of those values has finally reached the policy-makers in this country. I am eager and hopeful that a balanced agreement on this year's Farm Bill will include a landmark commitment to cost-share and incentive payments for farm stewardship practices, as outlined in the Harkin-Smith Conservation Security Act. When that investment is made, we will have taken a bold step toward recognizing and rewarding all the Baileys of this country, and ensuring that there are many more to come.●

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAM'S NATIONAL FLAGSHIP LANGUAGE INITIATIVE

● Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to request full funding for the Foreign Language Assistance Program, FLAP, which has been cut from the President's fiscal year 2003 budget and for the National Security Education Program's, NSEP, National Flagship Language Initiative. These two programs would enhance the foreign language capabilities of this Nation at a time when foreign language proficiency plays a critical role in maintaining our national security. The security, stability, and economic vitality of the United States depend on American citizens knowledgeable about the world. To become so, we need to encourage knowledge of foreign languages and cultures.

Unfortunately, the United States faces a critical shortage of language proficient professionals throughout Federal agencies. The inability of law enforcement officers, intelligence officers, scientists, military personnel, and other federal employees to decipher and interpret information from foreign sources, as well as interact with foreign nationals, presents a threat to their mission and to the well being of the Nation. It is crucial that we invest in programs like the Flagship Initiative and FLAP in order to strengthen the security of the United States.

While the General Accounting Office has highlighted the Federal Government's deficiency in personnel with foreign language proficiency, the entire country became aware of this problem after the events of September 11th, when FBI Director Robert Mueller called on English-speaking Americans with professional level proficiency in Arabic and Farsi to help with the translation of documents for the ensuing investigation. To address this need, Senators DURBIN, THOMPSON, and I introduced S. 1799, the Homeland Security Education Act, and S. 1800, the Homeland Security Federal Workforce

Act. These proposals are designed to improve educational programs in science, mathematics, and foreign languages and then attract graduates possessing these critical skills to the Federal Government.

However, these legislative initiatives cannot succeed if the foundations on which they are based are not supported. Moreover, while these initiatives go a long way to help agencies recruit those possessing these critical skills, we need programs like FLAP and the Flagship Initiative to create a larger talented and proficient applicant pool to address the growing foreign language needs in the national security community.

NSEP was created in 1991 by the David L. Boren National Security Education Act, P.L. 102-183, and administers three programs to enhance foreign language education: undergraduate scholarships for study abroad, graduate fellowships, and grants to U.S. institutions of higher education. As part of its grant program, NSEP intends to implement a National Flagship Language Initiative. The Flagship Initiative would establish national and regional language programs in universities throughout the Nation. These institutions would in turn educate significant numbers of graduates, across disciplines, with advanced proficiency levels in those languages critical to our national security.

The Flagship Initiative is designed to address the urgent and growing need for higher levels of language competency among a broader cross-section of professionals, particularly for those who will join the federal workforce. The goal is to produce students with professional proficiency in critical foreign languages. Professional proficiency is considered to be at least a level 3 proficiency in listening, reading, and speaking where an individual is capable of speaking with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.

However, current foreign language programs in the United States, both Federal and academic, at best, aim toward 'limited working proficiency' which is defined as level 2. This skill level includes the ability to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements and handle routine work-related interactions that are limited in scope. Level 2 proficiency is generally insufficient for more complex and sophisticated work-related national security tasks.

While programs like the Flagship Initiative would make significant improvements in the country's language capabilities, university-level training alone will not meet the challenge currently before us. We must also take steps to address what foreign language experts have recommended for years—start early. The Foreign Language Assistance Program, FLAP, initiates, through competitive grants, foreign